

What is claimed is:

1. An anchor for installing a plank in a deck system comprising:  
  
a base portion,  
  
a plank-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and  
  
5 at least one fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is inclined from vertical and extends through the plank-engaging portion and at least a portion of the base portion.
2. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor has substantially planar side walls, and wherein a cross-section of the plank-engaging portion is substantially circular or oval in shape.
3. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved  
10 protrusions capable of engaging corresponding anchor-engaging grooves on a deck plank.
4. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion includes a substantially planar section, and wherein an entrance of the fastener aperture is located on the planar section.
5. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor includes a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved protrusions, each curved protrusion  
15 having a substantially planar section, and wherein the planar section of each protrusion includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.
6. The anchor of claim 5, wherein the first and second fastener apertures are overlapping.
7. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the plank-engaging portion is substantially spherical, spheroidal or ellipsoidal.
- 20 8. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the anchor includes a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two curved protrusions, each curved protrusion

having a substantially planar section, and wherein the planar section of each protrusion includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.

9. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the fastener aperture is at an angle of between five and sixty degrees from vertical.

5 10. The anchor of claim 1, wherein fastener aperture extends at least partially through a side of the base portion.

11. The anchor of claim 1, wherein an exit point for the fastener aperture is entirely enclosed within a bottom surface of the base portion.

10 12. The anchor of claim 1, wherein the base portion includes a first and second end, and wherein each end of the base portion terminates short of a respective end of the plank-engaging portion a sufficient distance to allow the plank-engaging portion end to secure a plank.

13. A decking system comprising:

15 a plurality of anchors, each anchor having a base portion, a plank-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and at least one fastener aperture with a longitudinal axis disposed obliquely from a vertical plane and extending through the base portion and plank-engaging portion, and

a plurality of planks including a side wall having an anchor-engaging groove for cooperating with a corresponding protrusion of a corresponding anchor.

20 14. The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchor-engaging groove of the planks extends substantially the entire length of the planks.

15. The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors have a length that is substantially the same length as an adjacent plank.

16. The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors have a length extending at least the distance between two adjacent joists.

17. The decking system of claim 13, wherein the anchors include two protrusions, each protrusion having a top portion which serves as an entry point for a plurality of fastener apertures positioned intermittently along the length of the anchors.

18. The decking system of claim 13, wherein the plank-engaging portion of the anchors is substantially spherical, spheroidal or ellipsoidal, and wherein the anchors include a first and second fastener aperture, and wherein the plank-engaging portion includes two substantially planar sections, and wherein each planar section includes an entrance to a respective fastener aperture.

19. A method of installing a deck system comprising:

providing a first plank having an anchor-engaging groove,

providing a first anchor having a plank engaging portion and a fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is disposed obliquely from a vertical plane,

laying the first plank on a decking joist,

inserting the plank-engaging portion of the first anchor into the anchor-engaging groove of the first plank, and

inserting a first fastener through the fastener aperture and into the decking joist.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein said inserting a fastener step comprises providing frictional contact between said fastener and said anchor, and between said anchor and said anchor-engaging groove, so as to automatically control the position of said anchor to create a tight joint without further contact with the anchor by an installer.

21. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

providing a second plank having a first and second anchor-engaging groove,

providing a second anchor having a plank-engaging portion and a fastener aperture having a longitudinal axis which is disposed obliquely from a vertical plane,

5 laying the second plank on the decking joist adjacent the first plank with the first anchor-engaging groove of the second plank engaging the plank-engaging portion of the first anchor, and

inserting the plank-engaging portion of the second anchor into the second anchor-engaging groove of the second plank, and

10 inserting a second fastener through the fastener aperture of the second anchor and into the decking joist

22. A decking system, comprising:

a plurality of decking planks disposed over supporting joists, each of said decking planks having first and second curvilinear side edge portions;

15 a plurality of anchors having first and second side surfaces capable of frictionally mating between a first and a second curvilinear side edge portion of adjacent ones of said decking planks;

a plurality of fasteners disposed through said anchors at an oblique angle from vertical for joining said decking planks to said supporting joists.

20 23. The decking system of claim 22, wherein a pair of adjacent decking planks are locked together by at least one of said anchors.

24. The decking system of claim 23, wherein each of said anchors has at least one aperture therethrough disposed at an oblique angle from a vertical plane.

25. A decking anchor having a generally key-hole shaped cross-section, and a planar bottom surface.

5 26. The decking anchor of claim 25 having an aperture disposed therethrough from a top surface to said planar bottom surface.

27. The decking anchor of claim 27, wherein said aperture has a longitudinal axis disposed at an oblique angle from vertical.

28. A system for anchoring adjacent planar members to a base member comprising:

10 a plurality of anchors, each anchor having a base portion, a planar member-engaging portion having at least one protrusion, and at least one fastener aperture with a longitudinal axis disposed obliquely from a vertical plane and extending through the base portion and planar member-engaging portion,

15 a plurality of planar members including a side wall having an anchor-engaging groove for cooperating with a corresponding protrusion of a corresponding anchor, and

at least one base member into which the anchors are fastened.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the planar members are planks which form a deck.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the base member is a joist.

31. The system of claim 28, wherein the planar members are panels which form a fence.

20 32. The system of claim 31, wherein the base member is a rail.

33. The system of claim 28, wherein the anchors are substantially hidden from view.